



[Home](#) › [Media centre](#) › [Media releases](#)

› Caring for children and health still the main reasons women and men are unavailable for work

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Media Release

Released 6/11/2024

Source:

[Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia, 2023-24 financial year](#)

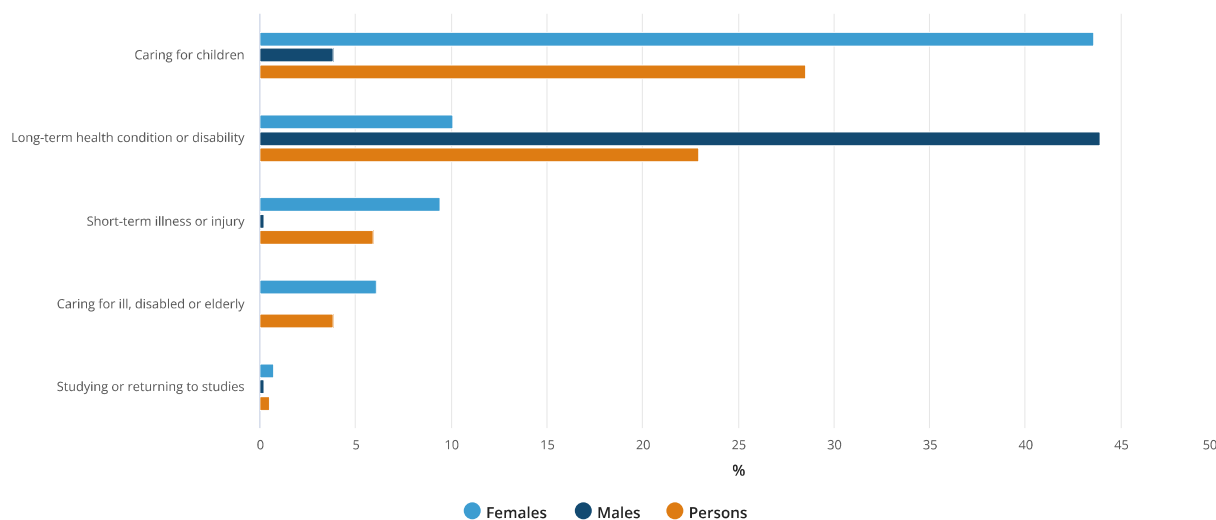
In 2023-24, almost a third (29 per cent) of people who did not have a job were unavailable to start work because they were caring for children and almost a quarter (23 per cent) due to a long-term health condition or disability, according to data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, ABS head of labour statistics, said: "While there were 1.2 million people who wanted a job, over 180,000 of these people weren't available for work (within the next four weeks). There continue to be major gender differences in the reasons men and women are not available for work."

"Caring for children was the top reason women were unavailable for work (at 44 per cent), but this was the case for only 4 per cent of men who were unavailable for work. Long-term health conditions or disability was the main reason for 44 per cent of men who were unavailable for work, while it was the main reason for only 10 per cent of women. Caring for children and health have continued to be the most common reasons for women and men for decades."

Main reason not available to start work within four weeks

 Feedback



Feedback

Of the 44 per cent of women who were unavailable for work due to childcare-related factors, over a third (37 percent) indicated childcare was the main barrier due to a lack of availability or cost. In contrast, 1 in 5 (21 per cent) indicated the main reason they were unavailable for work was that they preferred to look after their children.

Long-term health conditions

While long-term health conditions were a common reason people were unavailable to start work, not all people with a long-term health condition were unable to work or consider it the main reason they were unavailable for work.

"Of the over 700,000 people with a long-term health condition who wanted a job, less than 1 in 6 (16 per cent) said their long-term health condition was the reason they weren't working."

"For people with a long-term health condition, the most important factor to get them into work was finding a job that matches their skills and experiences, with 51 per cent rating this

as very important,” Mr Jarvis said.

Parents with children

Out of the 5.1 million parents with children aged under 15, around 700,000 parents did not have a job.

Around 83 per cent of parents with children who were not working were mothers. Of these mothers, more than two-thirds (65 per cent) had at least one child under five years old.

More insights on parents based on the labour force status of family members, including people in couple families, one-parent families, and other types of families can be found in the recently released [Labour Force Status of Families \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-status-families/latest-release\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-status-families/latest-release).

Incentives to work

Questions around incentives to work help identify the factors that may encourage people into paid work, which continue to differ between women and men.

“For women, the need to balance work and caring responsibilities means that job flexibility continues to be important in starting work or increasing hours. The ability to work part-time hours and set working hours on chosen days were the main factors reported by women.”

“For men, finding a job that matched their skills and experience remains the most important factor,” Mr Jarvis said.

The [Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/barriers-and-incentives-labour-force-participation-australia/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/barriers-and-incentives-labour-force-participation-australia/latest-release) release also has additional information about people who want a job, people who did not want a job, and people who work part-time but would prefer to work more hours.

Media notes

- 07/11/2024 - The percentage under the graph has been updated to correctly reflect the per cent of females who were unavailable for work, originally it was incorrectly reporting the proportion of all people aged 18-75.
- People with long-term health conditions are those who reported one or more of the following conditions: Arthritis or osteoporosis, Asthma, Cancer, Diabetes, Heart disease, Mental health condition, Long-term injury, or any other long-term condition. This is different from disability, though they are combined when reporting barriers.

- Access official, high-resolution images of Bjorn Jarvis and other ABS media spokespeople from our [image library](https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/abs-image-library). (<https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/abs-image-library>)
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- [Watch our data crash course](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le2K3PNejU4&list=PLR8_RxifMwL4JQTxYclMANzga67VBlyhj&index=11) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le2K3PNejU4&list=PLR8_RxifMwL4JQTxYclMANzga67VBlyhj&index=11), designed especially for journalists to learn how to find, download and interpret our data.
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